

Buskers and street entertainment- Terms of Use & Code of Practice

What is Street Entertainment/Busking

A performance to the passing public who sometimes very generously provide tips for enjoying the performance. The activity is usually a live music performance however some people also perform magic, living statues, jugglers and sand sculptures.

Why do we need a code of practice?

Solihull is a borough that is welcoming to street performers and buskers, and we recognise the role which they can play in improving the Street scene and driving footfall which is to everyone's benefit.

Street entertainers and buskers share the streets and open spaces with everyone else who live, work, trades or who take time out in the town centre. Inevitably there is potential for conflict amongst all the different uses that people make of the town centre. These guidelines aim to support a culture of consideration for others, compromise and cooperation between buskers, local businesses, council officers and members of the public engaging in useful discussions. Complaints about busking tend to apply to a small number of performers and usually relate to noise levels, repetitive performances or obstruction.

Most cases can be resolved in a polite way if they are dealt with before they escalate and a formal complaint avoided.

Where Street Entertainment & Busking can take place

Solihull Council allows busking on 3 Street Entertainment pitches in the pedestrianised section of the High Street and Mell Square. These can be seen on our [Entertainment Spots Map](#). You must register with us before being able to use any of the designated spots.

Street Entertainment can be carried out at these destinations by an entertainer or a group of no more than 4 performers or group

When Street Entertainment & Busking can take place

Spots are available for use from 10am until 6pm Monday to Saturday and 11am until 4pm on Sunday, except for a Tuesday morning when we will be creating a calmer shopping environment which is designed to help those who struggle in busy or loud environments, and which supports Purple Tuesday which is an initiative for improving the customer experience for disabled people and their families.

Each entertainment spot has its pros and cons, and these will change according to the time of day and the season and other activity on in the vicinity of the spot.

Each spot can be booked for up to 2 hours (including set up and take down time). Each performer can book up to 2 two-hour slots in two different locations on any one day and no more than 10 spots in any Monday to Sunday week.

There are regular markets and special events held on the High Street and in the Town Centre which may mean that the regular Entertainment Spots may be temporarily unavailable, or it may not be appropriate for these spots to be used when these are taking place. Where this happens, we will provide as much notice as possible.

Although a Street Entertainment licence is not required, we do require all entertainers and buskers to be registered with us by registering and **must adhere** to the following Code of Conduct

Street Entertainment & Busking code of conduct

The aim of this document is to set clear rules for Street Entertainers including buskers to follow to ensure any form of street entertainment can be conducted lawfully to enhance our town's culture without generating complaints.

We recommend you familiarise yourself with the spots and the surroundings before choosing to book a slot to ensure that your act is suitable for that location.

If you are a talented performer and would like to perform in one of our popular town centre entertainment spots please ensure you follow this code.

All entertainers must:

- Display their approval letter or ID Pass when performing and show it to a council officer, town host or police officer on request.
- Ensure that the location/pitch for any street performance or busking and method of activity, including the placing of equipment on the highway, does not cause undue obstruction to other users of the highway, or access to shops and business for pedestrians and those carrying out work in the town centre
- Ensure that their performance or busking activity does not cause a noise nuisance to those living or working nearby due to either the volume and/or duration of the performance. Volume levels must be relative and considerate, and performers must only use low powered amplification. A simple test would be the volume is too loud if a standard conversation cannot be held in a nearby shop. Equally, if the volume can clearly be heard 50 metres away it is likely to be too loud and performers must turn it down.
- Only use one of the 3 designated entertainment spots in the town centre and must not cause any obstruction on the public highway by using any other area. Wheelchairs, pushchairs and similar must be able to easily get past and performers should be mindful of positioning themselves on the spot without creating any pinch-points where this is likely to be an issue.
- Only be present for no more than 120 minutes in any one location (including breaks and set up and take down time) and not return to the same location within the same 24 hours. This is to be fair to all and prevent a location being monopolised by anyone act
- Comply If any one of our officers or representatives asks you to cease playing, reduce the volume or to move to a new location.

All entertainers must not:

- Attempt to use an entertainment spot without booking the spot in advance. To check the availability of a spot.
- Perform in a manner that could be considered dangerous and/or inappropriate and must not be dressed or conduct themselves in a manner that is likely to cause alarm, distress or offence to members of the public including the use of threatening, abusive or insulting words, costumes, props, behaviour or written material.
- Use mains or generator powered amplification.
- Make use of street furniture such as public seating, lampposts, planters, railings etc; this includes the attachment of posters and adverts.
- Cordon off any part of the pavement, for example with a rope, to create a performance area as your crowd is more likely to cause an obstruction and someone might get injured.
- Sit on the floor to perform
- Bring a vehicle into the pedestrianised area of the precinct or leave it in the vicinity of the entertainment spot.
- Use amplification for drums, trumpets or other loud instruments or otherwise cause noise nuisance to residents or businesses.
- Never leave your equipment unattended or in a manner which poses an obstruction or trip hazard.
- Keep backing tracks unobtrusive and turn them off when you're not performing.
- Allow anyone under 16 to perform as part of their act.
- Allow members of the public to perform as part of any singing or music performance.
- Use live animals as part of their act.
- Not actively collect money, using signage or any other means; however, it will be permissible to have a receptacle, such as a hat, music case or box for the acceptance of donations from the public. Contactless "tap to donate" transactions are accepted with the minimum value of the tap to be displayed.
- Sell any merchandise without a Street Trading Licence. If you wish to sell your items at a fixed price, then a Street Trading Licence is required. Please use the following link [Application for a street trading licence or consent from Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Request donations to a charity unless you have a permit. This is available from [Street collection permit | solihull.gov.uk](#)
- Obstruct access to shops and offices.

General Guidance

This guidance seeks to strike the right balance between the needs of performers and the impact on local businesses and residents and has the wellbeing and enjoyment of everyone's use of the town centre at its heart.

In line with that ethos street performers are requested to take regular breaks in order to allow crowds to disperse and are expected to comply with any reasonable request made by a council, town centre official or police officer.

A responsible adult should accompany minors busking or performing. (Those aged 16-17)

Resolving Issues

We want the spaces in the Town Centre to be enjoyable for all those who use it.

It is acknowledged that a musical busker needs to be heard above the level of background noise, but the volume of a performance should be no higher than it needs to be, and the sound produced should not be intrusive into the lives of others living or working nearby.

Most issues can be resolved amicably, and street entertainers are asked to be respectful and considerate and try and understand another's point of view.

- if someone approaches you to say they have been disturbed by the noise of your performance, do not be confrontational
- be reasonable with the person complaining. Ensure that you have been sticking to the Code of Conduct
- try to reach a compromise - can you reduce your volume or move to another site?
- if you feel that you have adhered to the code, but can't come to a compromise with the person complaining, politely inform them that you are following the code
- if you cannot reach a compromise, please phone on 0121 704 8000 for assistance.

The Council will continue to investigate complaints that are received about the activities of buskers and street performers; and carry out spot checks on the entertainment spots in order to ensure that they continue to offer additionality in the town centre and to ensure that performers are adhering to the code.

If there is a complaint about the music level on an entertainment spot the performer will be asked to reduce the level, move to one of the other designated spots or stop their performance. If an entertainer refuses to move, then the council has the powers to take enforcement action under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. West Midlands Police can also take action where they consider a public nuisance or obstruction is being caused.

Where issues cannot be resolved or where a performer fails to comply with this code of conduct Solihull Council may revoke a registration to use the entertainment spots or take enforcement action.

For further information and advice on busking please go to: [Busking Advice for Musicians in the UK](#)
| [The MU \(musiciansunion.org.uk\)](#)

Contact Details

All enquiries about these guidelines can be made to our Street Entertainment Team at Streetentertainment@solihull.gov.uk